

Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001
RE: Docket No. RM 2017-12

September 12, 2017

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Appalachian Mountain Club, our members, and our donors. We rely on the U.S. Mail to raise funds and communicate with our members and donors. Without the mail, our fundraising would suffer severely and, as a consequence, so would our mission.

We simply do not understand why suddenly there is a need to increase nonprofit marketing mail rates above the CPI rate. This would seem to fly in the face of the very important rationale for granting nonprofits a discounted rate in the first place. As a practical matter, injecting unanticipated increases such as those proposed by USPS will mean that our budget will not be able to keep pace with the increase in postage costs.

In fact, AMC was planning to expand our fundraising in 2018. Our plan included a large, long-term test of multiple fundraising appeals over the course 2018. Our budget is limited, but with a long-term outlook, we thought we figured out how to make the mail work for us. However, a 4 to 5% increase in postage costs means we will have to reduce our planned increase in direct mail in order to cover those costs, not only for this year, but also for the next several years. So you won't get nearly as much revenue, and the Appalachian Mountain Club won't gain all needed new donors who can support our work for years to come.

In addition, every postage increase has resulted in a corresponding reduction in member mail. With more than half of our membership over 60 years old, we struggle to maintain communications with our 75+ year old members, many of whom don't have email, or only want email from family. Additional reductions in mailed communications with those members further isolates them from our organization, many of whom have been members for over 25 and even over 50 years.

Respectfully, we ask you to consider these consequences due to the immediate harm to our programs. Please do not change the current system for calculating nonprofit rates. Implemented by the Postal Service ten years ago, we see no pressing need for a change, especially not one that will do harm to all nonprofit organizations using the mail. Nonprofit organizations are the least able to absorb such increases as they work in areas that benefit our society as a whole.

Your review and consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Teri Morrow
Director of Membership
Appalachian Mountain Club